anticipation

CHRISTIAN SOCIAL THOUGHT IN FUTURE PERSPECTIVE

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These papers are circulated for the information of participants in the ecumenical enquiry on "The Future of Man and Society in a World of Science-Based Technology". Comments are welcome.

Department on Church and Society, World Council of Churches, 150 route de Ferney, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland

EDITORIAL NOTE

A theme much discussed by the Working Committee on Church and Society at its meeting in Nemi, Italy, June 1971, was Images of the Future. The report of that discussion and the conclusions reached have already been published. (See "Three Reports from Church and Society", Study Encounter, September 1971)

Herewith we reproduce some of the papers and contributions to the Nemi debate as well as two essays which have appeared in other contexts.

Theodore Gill is Director of the Society for the Arts, Religion and Contemporary Culture in New York City. He is a Christian theologian well-known for his examination of the cultural and social implications of the Christian faith. His latest book, Memo for a Movie - A Short Life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer (New York and London, 1971) illustrates his unique gifts as a writer and thinker.

The remarks by Theodore Roszak on "Can Jack Get out of His Box?" are transcribed from the tape and reproduced here with apologies to the author for possible errors in reproduction. Professor Roszak is the author of The Making of a Counter-Culture (New York, 1967), a book widely discussed in recent years.

The paper on "The Making of the Counter Culture in a Marxist Perspective" was received from a Czech correspondent who has followed closely in the ecumenical discussion of the Future of Man and Society.

Dr. Hugo Assmann's paper on "The Christian Contribution to the Liberation of Latin America" was written for the 10th anniversary meeting of Church and Society in Latin America (ISAL), near Lima, Peru, July 1971. (ISAL is a pioneering ecumenical study and action group which has produced much of the intellectual and theological ferment within the Church in Latin America in recent years.) Dr. Hugo Assmann is a Roman Catholic priest from Brazil, who is both a theologian and a sociologist. He wrote this paper as an exile, living in Bolivia. Because of the recent social upheaval in that country, he has since been forced to flee to Chile where he continues to serve as Study Secretary of ISAL. He is also teaching at a Catholic University. He has published two books recently, Opresion - Liberacion (Uruguay, 1971) and Teoponte, una Experiencia Guerrillera (Bolivia, 1971) in which he examines social conflict and change from the theological and sociological perspectives. He is a graduate of the Catholic Faculty of Theology of the University of Münster. The views in his paper for ISAL well express the thought of Latin American contributors to our discussion on Images of the Future and the tenor of thinking in the recent ISAL meeting.

The paper by Paul Abrecht, Executive Secretary of the Department on Church and Society, was prepared as a contribution to the Nemi discussion.

Furthermore, it is this contextual imagery which alone sustains interest after a decision is made and action is begun. Without some congruity between this small effort and some big picture, morality is soon a drag. On its own, ethics is the biggest bore of all. Recent American activism is Exhibit A for the claim. Christian activists who yesterday were so busy becoming instant sociologists that they hardly noticed God's passing, are today wearing out. The ideas are still clear, and the imperatives as categorical as ever, but the snap is gone. So in the seminaries the prematurely grey revolution turns to devotional intensities that people mystery with massive figures, and that conjure up vast cosmic transactions in which we figure still. And at the university level my radical young children and friends now read art history. They will go to the barricades again, but when they go it may be in a larger scene.

So if we now turn to imagery, vision, myth, to fancy and projection, to contextual pictures, that will be for the most instantly practical reasons. For there decision is located and is sustained.

And let us admit to ourselves what we might not insist to others: that we should come to this study with some competence. This used to be religion's field. We ran out on it when we thought one temporary definition of scientific respectibility was the only respectibility. But if we stay out now, we will be the only ones. In all humane studies, myth and image and symbol are the currency of analysis. When we get home late, we will find it crowded.

A warning: the study of imagery is not the preparation of one more weapon for the lamentably limited arsenal of offensive arms for our assault on society. You can't grab images and swing them like a club. The images we speak of (whether created and offered by seers, or recognised by us as they emerge from our own experience, or both) are as subtle, intangible, as uncoercible as they are powerful and determinative. Studying them will help enormously, we think, our understanding of where we are and what we are up against. But studying them may take different methods and manners than we have ordinarily used in Church and Society. We will have to look a lot, and not talk at once about what we see; we will have to listen, and not just to experts; colour and sound and motion may have to find their place in our monochromatic steadiness, and poetry, fiction and fancy. And we might just as well not start at all if we limit ourselves to the little ecumenism which is all we have dared talk about yet.

We must have political and commercial models; I want now only one extra one. Not to take the place of either but to be added. And this I would call the gallery model for ecumenical life. The suggestion is that the great Church, the ecumenical Church understands itself from the beginning as being that large place within which all the great religious visions are maintained. And that means not a gallery where books are hung up on the wall, but a

gallery in which the visions are represented by communities of people who organise themselves around the original vision itself. Thomists, Calvinists, Lutherans, Anabaptists - you name it we've got it - all of them at home in the Church, whose organisation and finances are meant to keep them, to help them, to give them all their chance. As in a gallery, I didn't say museum, that's too dusty, that is what we are coming from.

The reason I say this is ecumenical is that it is impossible for any denomination to control it; each of these visions must be as important as it is itself. It must make its own impact as all other visions always have. It is unfair for us to organise a whole money-raising organisation to sustain one vision. We must stop preserving traditions denominationally, that is simply to pickle them. We give them all their chance and they will lapse and wane and they will come and go. If there is any truth, if there is any vitality in them, they will last.

When I was working for The Christian Century (U.S.A.) which in my day was vigorously anti-Roman Catholic and very pro-Indian (American Indian that is), in my day we had to be against everything the Pope said, whatever. And I found this very congenial at the time - this was before John - and in some ways I have that feeling again with the present Pope until I tried out my own gallery model. And then I realised that - no, he understands his role better than most of us. He does have a vision which he must maintain, he is the curator of a marvellous vision, the Thomist vision. And he is exactly right when he refuses to tack a California red-wood patio onto his Gothic palace. No, he should not, anymore than the curator of the Louvre should go and paint whiskers on the Mona Lisa because it's à la mode. But, he should not be allowed to take tens of millions of people into that alliance. He must operate ecumenically too as the great curators of the other traditions do. In the world of myth and imagery only the great ecumenism of all peoples in all times in continuing variety will do.

Esthetics is not a dirty word to me but I don't have to make the case for images on an esthetic base. I come to you not as an esthete, not with a sun-flower in my lapel, or a rose in my teeth or a frangipane in my hair, but as a hard-nosed Protestant Puritan moralist who knows what is important to decision.

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II

CAN JACK GET OUT OF HIS BOX?

or

The Counter Cultural Image of the Future

by

Theodore Roszak (U.S.A.)

(Remarks made to the Church and Society Working Committee, June 1971)

I want to examine three propositions in the course of these introductory remarks: Jack is in the box; Jack does not know he is in the box; Jack must come out of the box.

A great deal of the problem we face today can be understood in terms of the very limited anatomy of awareness that dominates our thought, our actions, our culture, our society, our meeting here. We are imprisoned within a view of the anatomy that depends practically exclusively on the perceptions of the eye and ear and upon things that can be spoken by the mouth.

If I began to draw you away from this anatomy (if I had the power to do that, which I don't, because I am as much a preacher of words as any of you here) you would probably feel that I was being very strange, very eccentric, perhaps shocking. Probably you would say: he is becoming very irrational. If, on the other hand, you find your awareness drifting away from that anatomy you might even begin to feel guilty about it and you would have to snap back and recapture that anatomy and hold it steady, because you would be irresponsible and impolite and you would want to come back as rapidly as possible to this anatomy.

If this conference is a success it will have kept us, all of us, in that state of awareness, that condition of awareness that is defined by that anatomy, as long and as intensively and as persistently as possible. And that is why it is set up as it is, with a lot of scheduling, scheduling of talks and paper reading, for fear, I suppose, that if we were not doing that all of us would say that we were wasting time. Because there is nothing else one does at a conference. When it becomes very difficult to maintain that state of awareness we go out and drink coffee and the caffein serves to enforce that anatomy, to sharpen that state of awareness, and then we come back and we can go through a bit more of it. To maintain vigorously this state, this anatomy of awareness, becomes fatiguing, it is very tiring. And that will be a sign that we have worked hard; and that will be a measure of our virtue - we have not fooled around, we have not wasted time. And if all

II

CAN JACK GET OUT OF HIS BOX?

or

The Counter Natural Laws of the Psyche

by

Theodore Dunham (U.S.A.)

(Address made to the Church and Society Writing Conference, June 1972)

I want to examine some propositions in the course of these introductory remarks. Jack is in the box; Jack does not want to be in the box; Jack wants out of the box.

A great deal of the problems we face today can be understood in terms of the very limited anatomy of awareness that dominates our thinking, our actions, our culture, our society, our reality, our existence. We are imprisoned within a view of the anatomy that depends primarily and exclusively on the perceptions of the eye and ear and upon things that can be spoken by the mouth.

If I began to draw you away from this anatomy (if I had the power to do so that, which I don't, because I am as much a prisoner of words as any of you here) you would probably feel that I was being very strange, very eccentric, perhaps mad-like. Probably you would say my ideas are being very illogical. If, on the other hand, you find your awareness drifting away from that anatomy you might even begin to feel guilty about it and you would have to make back and rationalize that anatomy and hold it steadily, because you would be irresponsible and impolite and you would want to come back as rapidly as possible to this anatomy.

If this conference is a success it will have kept us, all of us, in that state of awareness, that condition of awareness that is defined by that anatomy, so long and so intensively and so meaningfully as possible. Is that why it is set up as it is, with a lot of speeches, scheduling of talks and paper reading, for that, I suppose, that if we were not doing that all of us would say that we were wasting time. Because there is nothing else done at a conference. When it becomes very difficult to maintain that state of awareness we go out and drink coffee and the waiters behave in ways that are necessary, to sharpen that state of awareness. And then we come back and we can go onward a bit more at it. To maintain rigorously this state, this anatomy of awareness, becomes fatiguing, it is very tiring. The state will be a state that we have worked hard, and that will be a measure of our virtue - we have got locked around, we have got worked time. And if all

of the talk that goes on here is successful and intellectually respectable, it will be highly articulate, fluent, very precise, very calm, very dispassionate, very well reasoned. It will proceed in well composed sentences and paragraphs. People will not interrupt one another, they will not make rude noises, they will not show distress, anxiety, impatience or discomfort, they will hold all of that back out of that anatomy of awareness. They will ignore the extraordinary discomfort and restrictions that this room, these chairs, and so on place upon us. In short, they will stick to the point.

Now, I wonder if it occurs to any of you that this anatomy I am speaking of here is in fact the form of awareness that all of us have been systematically schooled into since kindergarten as being an intellectually respectable mode of behaviour. When did your education or mine ever suggest that intellect had anything to do with other parts or portions or avenues of awareness? From the time of our childhood, we were taught to sit still, not to fidget, not to be distracted, to pay attention; we were taught reading, writing, arithmetic and articulation and were then handsomely rewarded whenever we exercised that anatomy in a very expert, highly developed way. And as one proceeds then up through the ranks of education, to higher education that anatomy becomes even more and more dominant. When you are in the lower schools at least you have a recess break and you can pretend you have got a body, but when you get up to the higher education, even that vanishes and when you get to graduate school there is absolutely nothing left for the rest of your professional life.

What interests me is the way in which this anatomy has achieved cultural domination in our society, so that nothing that offsets that anatomy - art, ritual, ecstatic worship, visionary rapture and mystical communion, rhapsodic utterance, erotic feeling - none of this can any longer qualify as more than of marginal value, perhaps in small doses, now and then, therapeutic, perhaps entertainment, a private pleasure as some anthropologists have said - art in the western world holds the position of being a national park. It is fenced in, it's a place you go for relaxation and pleasure, has nothing to do with the real world which is outside the park.

To be rational in our society, to be realistic, to be responsible, is to insist on the strict hegemony of that anatomy. Only that counts, only that is a reliable contact with reality and only that represents exercise of the highest faculties. So that even when we turn to a study of irrational behaviour of our society it is a matter of turning this anatomy around. The unconscious then becomes in this model a kind of steam-engine, a kind of a machine, it becomes categorised, it becomes objectified, not experienced.

It seems to me that if one has any sense of sympathy at all one comes to realise that this is not a very pleasurable state of being. It is certainly not a pleasurable anatomy to assume most of the time. It is just too small a part of all that we are for us to reside in it for very long. It is what William Blake once called in diagnosing the sickness of Albion "a dark and narrow house". But from the exercise of that anatomy flows a rare and special

advantage - power, the power that allows for material manipulation and control. For this is already an anatomy of ruthless control within us as a psychology; it is a psychology of ruthless self-control and self-manipulation. It represents the subordination of all that the organism is, to one small part of that organism, to the headquarters of the entire body, and the censorship of the entire non-intellective self. What we call science, and technology as the working arm of science, is the projection of that psychology into the world - that is the study of man, the study of nature, and from that theme follows the exile, the repression, the screening out of whatever that psychology cannot comprehend; and thus we come up with a reality that is tailored to the capacities of one small part of the human awareness. Then we say, to know that diminished reality in increasing detail is to have knowledge and to know any other reality than that is to be mad, eccentric, whimsical, odd, certainly not to be reliable or expert. I would argue - but I won't take the time here to build this picture up - that it is upon that power-knowledge that our politics is now being built with ever greater intensity as time goes on in the 20th century. And the ultimate expression of this towards which we reach, towards which we aspire, yet never quite attain it, is the thing I call technocracy. Not as conspiracy, not as an establishment, but as a system that moves toward a certain ideal, a certain cultural ideal. The maximum power over the self, over society, over the environment for the sake of control.

The counter-culture begins with the awareness that what this anatomy of awareness knows is not the world but only a small box within the world, a very, very small box. And the project of that counter-culture is to break free of that box meaning to shatter the grip of this anatomy, to break it utterly and to open up long-clogged thoroughfares of awareness. Again to use Blake's words "to cleanse the doors of perception". The counter-culture is an amorphous thing, that has many follies and I will not apologise for that. But it is at its best an appetiser for anything and everyone, a very indiscriminate appetiser for anything and everything that this anatomy has closed out of human awareness and western culture. Isn't that really what it all adds up to? Just think about what's going on with the kids - the angelic ravings and the drugs, the occult and the rituals, the magic and the superstition, the exotic religion, the meditation and sensitivity training, the counter-grouping, the mysticism, the nature worship, the neuroticism, the drops and the highs, the peak experiences, the myths, the fairy tales, the Shamantic lore, the Dionysian music and the light shows that disorientate the dominant sensory equipment. All of this, the passion for childhood, for wildness, for wilderness, the fascination with madness and with the wisdom of the body - it all hangs together as being a widespread rambling, amorphous fatigue of the shortcoming of this dominant anatomy of awareness. There are already people who are living wholly and totally in a very different anatomy of awareness; for the eye and the ear are not linked solely and perhaps only very tenuously to those verbal centres of the body. These are not eyes and ears that pay much attention to books and to lectures and to talk. They have found other ways to be involved - textures and tones that the eye and the ear perceive; and they are not paying attention to logical connections and

numerical connections. They are paying attention to dazzling colours, startling sounds.

When one hollars, when one sings, shouts with joy and exuberance, this is being aware that there is a body there and that what comes from that body, the rhythms of the blood and the breath are important messages; perhaps the most important things that are going on within oneself. Right now, for example, probably the most important, the most real thing that is going on in any of us here has nothing to do with what I am saying, what you are hearing and the notes you are taking, but with what's going on in our blood, in our guts, the way we breathe or fail to breathe. All of that has probably much more to do with who we are and what we think and what we are committed to than anything we can put in words. And when we are being very smart or being very sensitive, we all know that.

The only future I find myself interested in is the future in which that anatomy of awareness I have sketched here has been subordinated to its proper strictly secondary place within the human corps, not destroyed, subordinated; as being one part, but only one part within the fully experienced psychic spectrum.

Is this to be irrational, is this to be anti-science? Well, it is surely to call for an end to the dominance of what some people think reason is and what some people think science is. And if that must be, so be it. If reason and science cannot expand themselves to include - more than information and knowledge in subject matter, to include the whole of the human psychology, the whole of the human organism, ecstasy and vision and erotic energy and magical awareness - if they cannot be expanded to include those things <u>on their own terms</u>, not by translation into what this anatomy likes to make of them but on their own terms, then they have no very important place in my future. And all I can say is - and I hope to be clearly understood - if this be irrationality make the most of it.

I think this means, this is to call for the breakdown of this anatomy, for its subordination. It means to see a future in which the cultural dominance of science and science-based technology will end and so will technocratic politics that are based upon science, and to speak of science and of science-based technology. It means, I think, an end to urban industrialism as the predominant way of life - to be written off as a bold, Promethean, dramatic and ultimately a bad experiment. Be realistic, pray for a miracle.

I think ultimately it means an end to every institution that is grounded in that anatomy - the school system, the university, the bureaucratic structures of every kind, and so too the religions and churches, that have mistaken creeds, dogmas, theology and preaching for the divine vision; that have mistaken words that were <u>the</u> words. For it is no coincidence in my mind that our scientised culture arises out of a Christian and especially a Protestant Christian society where religion has been more theologised and

literalised than any religion any place in the world. That is the special predominance of this anatomy of awareness.

Let me finish by returning to Jack-in-his-box and give you what might be called a projective history of Jack and his box as the future may shape up, as I think it will shape up for an increasing number of people. I make no predictions about who wins and who loses but I think for some Jacks-in-the-box it will be somewhat like this:

This is Jack speaking and going through some stages of development. "What do you mean, I am in the box? I am in the only place there is to be. ... Alright, so I am in the box. So what? I like the box. The box is the best place to be. God only knows what is outside of this box. Good old box. True, it is somewhat stuffy and cramped in this box, I admit; but being where it is very stuffy and cramped makes me feel responsible, even heroic. It is good to be miserable, it brings out the best in us. Besides, the box does not have to be that uncomfortable. I can put in some air-conditioning and wall-to-wall carpeting. And listen, I have got a swell new stereophonic record player. We could turn this box into a real pleasure palace if we worked at it. ... If I don't get out of this box soon, I am going to go crazy. I am crazy, everybody in the box is crazy. Crazy is normal, I adjust to it. No, I cannot help it, I've got to get out of this box, or at least half way out, if only for a little bit; now and then, maybe just on weekends. I am taking up sensitivity training. ... There are people living outside the box. Yes, there are, I saw them, and they were happy. I think they were happy. I don't know what happy means anymore. Maybe if I left the box just for a while, two weeks, a month at most, just to see what it is like".

And finally, "What a tiny little box right there in the middle of the universe. People used to live in that box, they say. But that's very hard to believe".

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III

THE MAKING OF THE COUNTER-CULTURE IN A MARXIST PERSPECTIVE

(From a correspondent in Prague)

In 1969 a remarkable essay was published in Czechoslovakia written by a Marxist philosopher, Jiri Hermach. It is called "The Self-Realisation of the Contemporary Man" (Symposium, Prague, knihovna doby). The author - originally a physicist - turns to one of the most important problems of the contemporary society, the conflict between man and his work, especially as defined by industry.

According to the author, something has gone wrong in contemporary society all around the world. There are many symptoms of this inner tension, but the writer gives his attention to the causes not to the symptoms. One of the main causes is the conflict between man and his work as defined by the industrial technology. There is a break, says the author, between the inner life of man and his industrial work. The industrial way of producing goods has shaped man. "Man created as a living being, has degenerated to become part of a machine. He did it without wanting it and without knowing it. He functions now within a new kind of reality; and he functions in a mass."

One of the results of this decline is that "things rule over man". The situation is that "millions of people are ruled in their lives by the enormous industrial machinery which controls and dictates to them. The people created it and accepted its benefits. They have to accept its dictatorship as well. They have created its rational implications and they have accepted even its irrational and absurd ones, at least up to now and/or so long as they do not find audacity enough to try to recognise the causes of this discord." The machine-man "has to recognise his decline and his true image". He has to change radically the rule of things over man "into the rule of the man over things".

The Nature of the Conflict

Industry does not need the whole man. It needs only a certain aspect of his creative activity and a rather mechanical functioning in the gaps of the mechanical machinery. An enormous amount of attention and energy is given to the production of consumption goods whereas almost no attention is paid to basic human needs. "The wealth of production of consumer goods contrasts with the rather disastrous neglect of the whole humanity to itself." The result of this dichotomy is a kind of general schizophrenia. The machine-man and man as

human being both live in the same person but they do not communicate. This social schizophrenia shows itself as well in the disfunction of man in the primary groups, e.g., in the family. "It is no more man who gives meaning to things but the thing which governs man and his needs - motivation." The schizophrenic dichotomy can be seen "in the world wars conducted with industrial technological perfection and mastery, and in the everyday kind of violence which makes man a part of a machine". The degeneration of man in industrial society can be seen everywhere. "The decay of man at the drilling machine, as well as the jurist, the shop woman, the physical scientist, the tractor driver, the teacher and the policeman." The conflict between man and his work has attained a detrimental stage: man becomes a new god unto himself - a machine producing neglect of itself.

The Nature of Industry

As industry is at the core of the conflict much attention is given to it by Professor Hermach. Scientific technology, rationalisation and logic, the methodology of the empirical sciences and mathematics, combined to produce modern industry. These sources are not blamed for the negative effect of industry upon man. It is rather the one-sided activity of man asked for by the industry which is responsible. It is the demand of industry asking only for a certain kind of activity and creativity and abolishing at the same time any other kind of activity and creativity. "It is not only private property and it is not that in the first instance which makes a special social force out of industry, which by its one-sidedness divides man from the totality of his being and which compels him to a one-sidedness and to a one-sided disintegration of life ... Industry looks for and drives to a resonance with its one-sidedness. It compels man. It restrains, dampens and suppresses the other abilities of man, their use and development. The thing called industry dictates to man." This industry represents "a new kind of life, where man becomes nothing more than a part of the machine". Industry becomes a dictatorial economic machinery. Man became only a mechanical part of it, a mechanically acting object. He works under the auspices and under the authority of industry.

The author pays attention also to the positive effects of industry. Industry helped radically to improve the living standard of the people in the last 200 years. But it is also seen that industry has driven people to change from the life of a human being to functioning as a mechanical art. Industry drove them to accept themselves as exchangeable units in the machinery. Material well-being was exchanged for the possibility of creating one's own life out of itself. The result was that "man changed the world into an industrial machine and this machinery changed and shaped man into a kind of mechanical part of the machine". People lost their originality and became anonymous, exchangeable and valued only according to their productivity as prescribed by industry. Personality became an obsolete topic. The stereotype was given top place in the hierarchy of personal values. Output became criterion

number one, man was "saved" from the drive to look for the meaning of his life. To ask for the meaning of the life was thought to be out of date.

The Possibilities of Human Creativity

There are different ways to improve this situation. Some of them are rejected by the author: "neither the use of power directing the movement of the mass of people according to a plan of the privileged brains" nor "by mobilising trust in the already established powers". A different way has to be developed. It can be done only by a power that is able to mobilise and gather all the social forces for that aim. The aim is clearly defined: "The self-realisation of man as a social, universal, world and cosmic being, and open to the cosmos". It is "a call to a creative activity and not to any kind of repetition".

The remedy stresses the recognition of the true meaning of the human being. The author sees that "there is no lack of activity on this crossroad, neither a lack of energy and means. There is no lack of manpower. The basic lack is the lack of spirit that would give direction and motivation to people and nations. The spirit that would know what and how. The spirit that would know and press." It is therefore risky to neglect any further the number one topic for study: man himself and his future.

Man has to give meaning to things. By his nature he is a creative being. He is able not only to create a new world but he is able as well to "create" himself. Both these kinds of creativity go hand in hand. They cannot be separated. To be able to humanise the world man has to humanise himself via self-creation. This is a never-ending activity: "to create himself and his own world can never be a perfect and final activity".

But for this the author believes that man has to learn how to go from a destructive creativity to a constructive one. There is a danger in the creative ability of man. "The creation of man is risky; man can create also faults and monsters ... he can make of himself a faulty being or even a monster ... " The creator may become a destroyer. If man has not the possibility to develop his truly creative abilities then it is quite easy to develop in a wrong way. The conflict between the potential and real man can lead him to disastrous ends.

There is "a message that compels man to stop taking himself as a part of the social machinery and to begin to look for and to take the way of self-creation, as a human being able to take responsibility for his life. It means a human being recognising himself as a decider and a being giving itself a meaning - an individual meaning ... ".

Much cannot be expected from a man who does not take himself for a whole human being or who has been hindered in that e.g., by the one-sided industrial

way of life. "This man is for himself of no value and any other man is for him of no value as well."

One proposed plan of action for the future examined by the author is the military march. This prospect promises every participant a role. It promises a solution of all problems by involving him in the marching company. The author calls it "a bad Messianistic lie". The danger of the military march solution is a real one, but there are other dangers as well. There are the seducing ideals of the society of achievement. The rules of this society do not acknowledge the true human being. It is nothing more than a functioning part in the grandiose machinery of the industrial society, and with no other meaning for life than to function. The relation "man, a wolf to man" tends to the outcome of the present situation: "Man, a thing to man". Apathy is the disastrous symptom of this relation and as industry is the most powerful force leading man to this apathy, we have to realise that there are two different ways to go: either to subject oneself to industry and its rule (tempting to millions of people), or to look for the possibilities of liberating man from the one-sidedness asked for by industry. The first is in the view of the author based on "a belief that is not far from the belief in a bad god". There is at the end of the book a positive description of the other way: "energetic and conscious cooperation in the radical change from the mechanical to the cybernetic pattern of organisation. The freeing of the man that will result from this change has to be used for recultivation of man. In education this recultivation will mean a change from the routine to a creative kind of activity, from a mastery of handling things to a mastery in handling one's own self as a human being ... The difficulty of realising this is obvious."

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IV

THE CHRISTIAN CONTRIBUTION TO THE LIBERATION OF LATIN AMERICA

by

Dr. Hugo Assmann (Chile)

The Christian Contribution

This paper does not deal with the Christian contribution to liberation in a general or ideal perspective. The specific contribution which Christians may make will be seen as a subsidiary element in the process rather than the central or only one. I am interested in describing realistically what the Christian contribution is and can be, in the conditions possible in Latin America. Clearly this approach requires the constant bringing together of the theological with the sociological and political perspectives. This is, moreover, the normal and necessary way of 'doing theology' in Latin America today.

Commitment to the process of liberation in Latin America implies as a starting point a particular analysis of our real situation as dominated peoples. This choice of one specific analysis of our society is not a neutral one. Opting for, and the use of, an analytical tool necessarily assumes a certain ethical-political stance. There is no such thing as pure social science and any pretence that there is gives evidence of a reactionary ideological position. As is well known, this theme has become central to methodological discussions in the social sciences. At the moment there is probably no clearer example of a 'committed' or 'contesting' science than that presented by the social sciences in Latin America as they move towards accepting the idea of 'dependence' as the key to a theoretical interpretation of our real situation as dominated people.

What is meant by "Process of Liberation"?

First, some brief comments on the fundamental context of the social analysis of the liberation process, a context which is characterised by the close correlation between the concepts of 'dependence' and 'liberation'.

The vocabulary of 'liberation' has obviously not sprung spontaneously from within ecclesiastical reformism (for example, that of postconciliar Catholicism). It represents a distinct break with development terminology and all that it implies for the fields of social analysis, politics, etc. Therefore, to speak of liberation is to adopt a new analytical approach to our situation, a fundamentally new concept of underdevelopment, and, as a result, a new point of departure for delineating political and economic means of overcoming this condition.

The language of liberation permits us to express the revolutionary consequences which must be drawn in the social, economic, and political fields from the analytical terminology of 'dependence'. This is why the appearance of this terminology at this particular moment in history is highly significant. It is directly linked with the new focus in the analysis of underdevelopment. At the same time, it springs from the accumulated frustration with developmentalist models, and represents their rejection.

Although we cannot explore fully the tremendous implications of this new understanding of our situation, a few points may be outlined. The concept of dependence has its origin in the crisis of development theory. It is not a complement to this but an expression of its total rejection. Underdevelopment is not an early and primitive stage of developed capitalism, but rather a direct consequence of it, a special kind of capitalism shaped by development itself: dependent capitalism. Because a condition of dependence has determined our whole history, this condition provides a new scientific explanation of our situation: underdevelopment is a form of dependence.

Dependence is not simply an external factor which characterises international relations. It must be acknowledged, in contrast to traditional interpretations, that it conditions and shapes also the whole internal structure of our countries. This implies seeing development and underdevelopment together as one single phenomenon of world history. Dependence must be seen within the overall framework of imperialism, but having at the same time a reality of its own. This results not only in an extension of the theory of imperialism but also in a reformulation of its essential elements.

By 'process of liberation' we mean, therefore, the new revolutionary road which Latin American countries must follow if we are to seek a viable way out of our dependent situation. Take-off point for this new revolutionary road is the rejection of developmentalist solutions of every hue, including such subterfuges as the so-called 'third way solutions' (state capitalism, multiplying the points of dependence in order to decrease exploitation through a single dominant one, revolutionary nationalism, etc.).

On this still rather general plane, the option for the road of liberation does not go as far as to work out detailed tactics and strategy for the liberating struggle, for example at this stage nothing is said about how, in certain circumstances, through the electoral process, a government take-over could lead to something more radical ('the Chilean way'). Nor are there any indications of the priority steps to be taken towards economic liberation. Therefore this stage represents an abstract position which must be given concrete detailed form according to the particular circumstances. No one who remains at the level of generalities can work effectively for the liberation of his country. If liberation is to be a valid way to revolution, a strategy for it must be worked out (which includes the choice of clear political theses), and tactics must be devised for putting it into effect in accordance with the established priorities. In terms of political action, there must be

no evading the choices related to the crucial questions of strategy and tactics involved in defining what precisely is meant by such expressions as 'party', 'proletariat', 'vanguard', 'methods of action', etc.

The use even in a general way of the term 'process of liberation', if we accept the minimum implications of an anti-development choice, reveals clearly a social analysis and an ideological and political position which permit us to draw a dividing line between Christians and our fellow citizens in general. It is only necessary to be aware of the possible ideological function (in the negative sense of the term) which can be served by a vague choice for liberation without the courage to implement it through concrete action.

The Position of Christians vis-à-vis the 'Process of Liberation'

We will speak here primarily of Latin America, though adding a few comments on the stand taken by churches at the world level in relation to the process of liberation in the form outlined above. Obviously we are forced to make rather general statements without giving them the proper nuance.

The significant fact is the increasingly clear and definite choice being made by minority groups of the Christian vanguard in Latin America in favour of the process of liberation characterised by the socio-analytical elements described here and implying a revolutionary stance. In the light of this important fact, an analysis of specific examples of Christian presence in the process of liberation becomes increasingly necessary and relevant. As we know, each national situation has its own unique characteristics and priorities.

Perhaps one of the most significant new factors in Latin America is precisely the sense of growing urgency among Christian groups committed to liberation. They take for granted a general stand in favour of the process of liberation and proclamations which refer to it in vague terms. It would be unjust simply to label as imposters or thoughtless activists those who demand that a clear connection be made between ideological-political reflection and action for liberation and reflection on the faith as the action of love within history. In recent years there has been frustration enough in this camp. It is sufficient to note, among Catholics, the rapid dissipation of a certain euphoria, such as existed in the post-conciliar and post-Medellin periods, and the subsequent withdrawal into the church.

1. The Church at the World Level

The hierarchies of the various Christian churches and church organisations concerned with social problems (Pontifical Commission Justice and Peace, and the equivalent bodies of the World Council of Churches, various national bodies, etc.) have not yet fully understood the process of liberation in Latin America in its acute form, nor does it seem that they will be in a position to do so in the near future.

There has been obvious progress in the field of Christian social ethics, and especially in more or less official documents (papal encyclicals, the resolutions of the Beirut Conference on the churches and development, of the Uppsala Assembly, etc.). In addition, some rather symbolic actions (e.g., the financial support by the WCC of 'liberation movements' in Africa) have sometimes given to the world the impression that the churches are beginning to veer towards a revolutionary position. The breach which this represents in the classical conservative image of the churches is doubtless significant. Christianity at the world level is beginning to look, even to the Marxists, like a potential force for change in the world.

In spite of this, the churches of the rich world are prevented by their structures even from transforming themselves into a more or less explicit source of support for the real struggle for liberation of the Latin American countries. Only in more general terms - the emphasis on international injustice, the abandoning of a naive anti-communism, openness to approaches by individuals and Christian action and reflection groups, etc. - can we speak of a certain breakthrough in relation to explicitly revolutionary ideas.

Fundamentally the churches of the rich world continue to be mainly preoccupied with their internal affairs, usually embodied in huge bureaucratic structures centred on worship, with 'social action' as a mere appendix. In theological terms, the fundamental question is whether these are an expression of the doctrine of the nature of the church as the servant of men. The church does not find in itself, that is to say in its own sociological structures, its raison d'être, because its vocation is to be completely at the service of the world. Although we would not deny the importance of the 'ecclesial moment' (momento eclesial) centred on worship and the preaching of the Word, it would seem that the church's affirmation about its missionary nature demands a much more decisive orientation towards the pole of the world.

'Political abstentionism' continues to be one of the slogans most assiduously propagated by the churches of the affluent world, which have also exported it to the Third World. The ideological and pseudo-theological bases of this position are well known (the mission which is 'proper' to the church, the 'autonomy of the temporal', etc.). These are constantly reiterated in new forms, under the pretext of theology ('theology of secularisation', etc.). Yet it seems that the moment has not yet arrived when the churches of the rich world will understand the clear, political function served by their professed 'apoliticism'. At the level of the ethical, doctrinal, and legal superstructure, much remains to be done to clear the way, even though a beginning has been made in the realm of theory. Here too the real roots of the evasion are probably to be found in the limits set by the infrastructure.

The very progressive exegetical and theological positions taken by the affluent world revolve, with few exceptions, around points which are irrelevant to the serious problems of the world. It would be unthinkable to try to secure

agreement, in an international meeting on theology, on a socio-analytical concept like 'underdevelopment as a form of dependence'. Therefore it is quite understandable that Latin American theologians, sometimes in an almost aggressive way, reject as irrelevant such progressive statements. This is not to underestimate the valid contribution of European or North American theology in other fields. On the whole, however, it is not a theology which is sensitive to, or which sensitises people to, the most pressing challenges of history. In many cases it displays more of an unfeeling cynicism when confronted with the fact that thirty million people die annually of hunger and malnutrition and with the urgency of liberating the oppressed.

We must not forget that for the general public the recognised spokesmen of Christianity continue to be the Christians of the affluent countries. They are 'the Christian world'. 'Christian Latin America' is an exception in the Third World. Perhaps this constitutes the principal sociological element in the unique vocation of the Latin American Church, a vocation which requires that it increasingly differentiate itself from Christians of the rich world as they are today. Geography is beginning to take on a significant meaning for Christian witness.

2. The Latin American Churches: Officialdom and People

Just as a position of 'dependence' conditions the lives of our people - not merely their external affairs but also historically the realities of their day-to-day existence - so it is also the key to any interpretation and understanding of Latin American Christianity: it is a dependent Christianity.

This is certainly an oversimplification, but the facts must be taken into account if we are not to fall into incoherent and euphoric expectations about the possibilities for rapid overall change in the structures of Latin American Christianity, especially in the hierarchy and in the real situation of the people in the congregations. In spite of obvious initial breakthroughs in certain aspects of this dependence, to which we will refer later, the infra- and superstructural mechanisms of dependence are still strong and effective.

Not only is there in reality no explicit and consistent turning of the hierarchy and of Christians as a whole towards a definite commitment to the process of liberation, but there is little probability of a change of such magnitude in the near future. Therefore, it must not be relied upon in the development of any strategy of liberation.

What is undeniable is that people are talking about liberation in a general way. We find this even in documents issued by the top-level ecclesiastics. But these usually give little evidence even of a theoretical understanding of the implications for history of the process of liberation, much less of an effective and consistent commitment to action. In other words, at this level in the Latin American churches there is no determined rejection of developmentalist efforts or any clear new plan in opposition to the status quo.

Nevertheless, there is increasingly something which differentiates the churches of Latin America, at the official and even the overall level, from those of the affluent world. Although this remains ambiguous, their language is different, their priorities are different, their circumstances are different. It remains to be discovered whether they will gain the strength to make a definite break with vague denunciation which would be completely ineffective in our situation. Along this same line, it will be essential to analyse what is the particular polarising force which can be developed by individuals and groups from a minority who commit themselves in an effective way to liberation. It is a known fact that prophetic minorities are often able to play an unexpectedly decisive role in decision-making, especially in meetings where statements are produced.

The Latin American churches today frequently excel themselves in making statements. In this way they produce the ambiguous phenomenon of a sort of self-destruction, which later inevitably turns into a retreat, but which also creates a new frame of reference for those who are determined to push ahead. What is perhaps most significant from the political point of view is the impression of a new resolve to advance which it creates in public opinion and which so frightens the governments. The right is becoming increasingly convinced that it can no longer count on the Church. The left sees the Church as a potential ally. Perhaps it is no exaggeration to say that this impression - because it is more an impression than a reality - of the broadening base of support for liberation within the churches is being converted into an important stimulus which operates as a breach in the whole superstructure, as a sort of 'self-fulfilling prophecy'. The documents of CELAM (Roman Catholic Bishops Conference of Latin America) - Medellin 1968 - probably provide the clearest example of this: they are the ultimate in official declarations; in fact they go beyond the possibilities for action by the bishops, and for that reason cannot be considered as binding on them; and they have been adopted as a banner and guide by the Christian vanguard. They trouble the conscience of the hierarchy and those Christians who have not taken a stand, and give many non-Christians the impression that a way to a possible alliance is beginning to open up.

But there are also obstacles arising from the structures: ideological elements related to ethics and theology, a 'middle class' orientation (the Latin American churches, in spite of their popular base, have always been ideologically conditioned by the upper and middle classes), and the strong pressure exerted by the churches of the affluent world, whose domination makes itself felt in ways which are increasingly 'respectful' and subtle, but none the less real. Evidences of the existence of such obstacles are the repeated efforts to narrow down and push to the periphery the prophetic functions; the ideology of unity above all; the inability to identify clearly and face openly the real conflicts in society; insistence on the force of an imaginary, historical love and of the universal principles embodied in the vague social teaching of the Church, unrelated to an analysis of the tactical and strategic possibilities; and finally, as they have not made a clear choice

for the priorities of the historical process, the constant temptation to retreat into the Church and a simple pastoral reformism.

Perhaps it is worth repeating here what is frequently affirmed in statements made by committed Christians: the greatest differences which still exist among Christians are not those between the preconciliar traditionalists and the postconciliar reformists, who are preoccupied almost exclusively with pastoral reforms within the Church and lean towards political abstentionism. The really profound divergence which is tending to become an abyss, is that between the reformists within the Church, nourished on North Atlantic progressive theology, and aroused Christians who have committed themselves to meeting the main challenges of the process of liberation.

3. Christians committed to Liberation

Who are they? As we noted earlier, a factual analysis of the action of Christians in the revolutionary ranks is becoming ever more urgent. The specific strategy and tactics employed vary greatly from case to case. The best known groups are those made up primarily of priests, pastors, and 'neighbourhood ministries' of the churches. In Latin America, where the society and culture are 'Christian', their impact has been the most remarkable. The polarising force of the action of Camilo Torres falls into this category. This is not the time to go into details about the groups: the Third World Priests (Argentina), ONIS (Peru), Golconda (Colombia), Young Church (Chile). ISAL-Bolivia is unique. It is somewhat analogous to the above groups, but it has a breadth of influence and a strength of impact which are really impressive. Its composition is also unusual. In spite of its Protestant origin, its membership is more than ninety per cent Catholic. Another exceptional characteristic is the large number of laymen - many of them avowed Marxists - who are members. It has been said that for many, including priests and nuns, ISAL-Bolivia represents something like a new Church. We do not intend to analyse here all the complexities of this case, the ambiguous subjective motivations involved, the advantages and the dangers. It is undeniable that because of its political line, ISAL-Bolivia is at present a significant auxiliary vanguard in the process of liberation.

It must not be forgotten, however, that if the presence of Christians in the struggle for liberation already constitutes a significant fact - so much so that the 'theology of liberation' is conceived primarily as critical reflection on the action of those who constitute this fact - it is due primarily to the growing number of laymen in the front ranks of that struggle. For purposes of this paper, we do not want to restrict the concept of commitment to the process of liberation to the methods used in the struggle by remaining at the level of the fundamental implications of such a commitment, since this does not suffice to give a concrete and detailed idea of the Christian contribution. However, we should note in passing the immensely powerful impact made by the fact that the number of Christians in movements of the new left, in movements of direct action (for example in those like the

Tupamaros) and in national liberation fronts continues to grow. The number who are active in the Taoponte guerillas (Bolivia) is so large that their very existence can be attributed in great part to this Christian presence.

It is important to emphasise here the distinctive characteristics of the choice made by a growing number of Christians in favour of the process of liberation. Leaving aside the particular elements in each case, we would hold that in general this choice is marked by the following:

- The growing awareness of the implications for social analysis of a new concept of 'underdevelopment' in the terms described over. The emergence of the language of liberation in Christian groups is closely related to this consciousness of the accumulated frustrations with developmentalism.

- As we understand it, the anti-developmentalist position of Christians constitutes a distinct point of departure and a key element in their choice for liberation. This position is heavy with consequences, first because it means that they are out of step with the reality of the churches as a whole, and secondly, because this position has extremely concrete implications for the political life of each country (in Bolivia, for instance, it necessarily implies the rejection of the 'third way' which goes under the name of 'revolutionary nationalism', and opposition to both the indecision of the government and to the MNR (Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario) which represents imperialism.

- In the realm of politics, it is clear that such Christian groups are obliged to adopt clear political theses without denying the ambiguity involved in such an ideological step. In other words, their reflection on the concrete shape which the faith assumes when it is expressed in history as action for liberation necessarily concerns itself with tactics and strategy without of course limiting itself to these.

- Theologically, these Christians have effectively shifted the central axis of their faith; this is no longer a body of doctrine, nor worship (both of which are important but, we would say, secondary), but clearly the historical process of liberation. This obviously implies a new vision of their churchmanship and requires a reshaping of the most central categories of traditional theology. What becomes crystal clear is that for them the prophetic element of Christianity - prophecy as denunciation and action - takes precedence over the institutional elements.

- Another point which is common to many, one which has been expressed freely in Latin America for years, is the awareness that the traditional contributions of Christian social ethics and the social doctrine of the Church are totally inadequate to make operative in the cause of liberation the most radical implications of the faith. As a result of this lack of analytical instruments and of a full and concrete elaboration of strategy and tactics, they find themselves compelled to resort to those provided by Marxism.

The overall consequences of this step are not always calculated. Such questions of methodology are now becoming central in meetings on 'the theology of liberation'.

- Many take a further concrete step beyond the euphoria of revolutionary theoreticians, and as a result become aware of the ambiguity, uniqueness, and isolation of their position in the overall context of Christian sociology. This obviously leads them to new and more serious action and reflection on both politics and theology.

- Christians committed to liberation are also becoming increasingly aware that their choice implies the overt introduction of the class struggle into the heart of the churches. They know that they are not at one with all other Christians, that they have rather placed themselves in open conflict with the majority of them. But they know that there is no way of escape from such opposition, because they must take sides with the exploited. For that reason conflict, seen in historical and realistic terms, has become the central theme of the 'theology of liberation'. These Christians, therefore, find themselves obliged to denounce the false ideology of unit-without-conflict in the Church. This certainly represents a major point of difference with the conception of historical reality held by the Church itself. These Christians cannot accept that, in spite of the existence of exploiters and exploited, all nevertheless always come together at the eucharist. It is easy to imagine how real is the tension and conflict which this introduces into the perception of the faith.

The Christian Contribution: to open Breaches in the Superstructure

Let us turn now to a more searching analysis of certain aspects of the Christian contribution to the process of liberation. We would emphasise at the outset one serious limitation which can be a source of frustration for many committed Christians in their revolutionary activity. But we believe, for reasons which we shall point out, that in the Latin American context this sense of frustration need not be experienced.

An analysis of the impact which has been made until now by the presence of Christians in the ranks of the liberation makes quite evident that their commitment has been most effective in opening up a breach, in making a deep incision, in the superstructure represented by traditional bourgeois ways of thinking. In this the revolutionary activity of Christians has proved to be tremendously important, even though it is very difficult to assess accurately the results. Already the traditional image of the ideal Christian, who peacefully accommodates himself to the existing social order, is an unqualified proponent of 'peace' above all, a complacent observer of the rules of the game as set by the status quo, has been practically destroyed.

But is it on this that the revolutionary process turns? According to Marxism, it obviously is not. The churches to be effected by the process of liberation must be primarily fundamental: economic, social, and political. It is obvious that the revolutionary intent of Christians aims directly at this, but has its primary influence up until now been related to it?

Everything depends upon how we conceive of effectiveness within history. Those who think of it in terms of immediate results will have to write off as insignificant much that has been done. The clearest example is probably the activities thus far carried on by Latin American guerrillas. But this position is shown to be contrary to the facts when the revolutionary process is analysed in long-range terms, as one made up of many stages and of apparent failures which are ultimately revealed as enormously relevant in the long run.

Moreover, we believe that an exaggerated Marxist orthodoxy is incapable of taking into account all characteristics of the Latin American situation. It is not possible here to enter into a cultural analysis which would be inadequate if it were not integrated with those roots of the situation revealed by a dialectical analysis of structures. But it is fundamental in our situation to go deeply into what must be understood by the 'relative autonomy' of the various elements which make up the superstructure. It is in the superstructure of our countries, and not only in the infrastructure, that many roadblocks to change are embedded and the removal of these obstacles is of great significance for the revolutionary process. It is undeniable that the obstacles present in the superstructure, and especially those represented by 'petit bourgeois' values and by the tendency among the masses to accept passively things as they are related, in both their origin and persistence with pseudo-Christian 'traditions' and 'values'.

Perhaps it would not be out of place to include here a comment made by Engels on the false interpretation given to Marx and himself by those who thought that Marxism attributed importance only to elements of the infrastructure. 'The materialist interpretation of history holds that in the final analysis what determines history is the production and reproduction of real life. Neither Marx nor I has ever affirmed more than that. The economic situation is basic, but various factors in the superstructure which is built upon it - the political forms of the class struggle and their results, the constitutions drawn up by the victorious class after it has won the battle, the legal forms - all these also have an influence on the course of history, and in most cases are dominant in shaping it'.

From the Christian point of view, the fact that in Latin America liberation requires the removal of important obstacles present in the superstructure has a relevance for one fundamental element of the Christian faith. Man receives life as a gift, he is created from 'outside' himself by God. This sounds vague, but it has very concrete implications which are closely related to our belief in revelation. Man does not spring forth spontaneously from the structures, although they provide the necessary material conditions for

his 'birth' as a new man. But if the material structures which provide the context shaping the consciousness of man do not add up to a process in which love is expressed through call and response, then what is generated is in fact a mere product of the structures and not the new man. In this sense the term Christian 'witness' which has been emptied of its meaning retains its full force at the heart of the process of liberation. Moreover, it should not be forgotten that the new revolutionary ethic on which Che Guevara constantly rang the changes is based on this concept; he knew how to utilise the real channels through which love can operate effectively to transform history.

It is important to underline in this connection that since, in certain circumstances, the action of Christians is effective primarily in clearing away obstacles present in the superstructure, they must refrain from proclaiming themselves outright as the 'revolutionary vanguard' because they are in reality no more than an auxiliary. This means that their influence will be limited to the impact made by breaking the superstructure. Already, at least in the case of Christians of petit bourgeois origin, as well as of intellectuals, priests, etc., this aspect would seem to be dormant. This obliges them, in terms of overall political analysis, to take the humble position of auxiliary to the vanguard. Obviously this does not necessarily mean asking for an inferior position in the more active ranks in the revolutionary struggle. On the contrary, it will be an incentive to more radical and effective commitment. What we are emphasising was plainly demonstrated in the polarisation of the Christian guerillas of Teoponte whose action is the ultimate in radicalism. But their influence seems to have been above all in making a deep breach in the superstructure of a Bolivia marked by indigenous traditions and religions, and by a superimposed cultural 'Christianity'; and held back to a tremendous extent by these elements of 'religiosity'.

The Christian Contribution: A Revolution in the Infrastructure

Are changes in the infrastructure the real contribution which Christians can make to the central thrust of the process of liberation? After the foregoing considerations, we can limit ourselves to several concrete illustrations.

Those who make a definite choice for the process of liberation and even for the socio-analytical assumptions which this choice implies must be consistent in recognising the primary importance of changes in the infrastructure of our countries. This must therefore be made very clear in the formulation of revolutionary aims. The open confrontation with imperialism, in its internal and external operations, is not only a revolutionary slogan but the reference point for the changes which must be accomplished above all in the infrastructure.

Not only can there be no revolution without a theory of revolution - just as there can be no theory of revolution without action, because theory must be in and of action - so there can be no genuine theory of revolution without the elaboration of a historical project. A theory of revolution is not simply the working out in terms of strategy and tactics of the methodology of the struggle. It is that, but much more: it is a well worked out definition of the objectives of liberation in the form of a historical project. This will be a long-term process. In the Latin American context, the primary importance of politics and the urgency of the struggle have often led leftists to reduce to a minimum the formulation of any historical project. It is here that Christians must make a contribution and not simply by repeating fragmentary plans for immediate political consumption. As a matter of fact, there are already the beginnings of a growing Christian imprint on real theories about the goals and stages in the process of liberation.

The question of the revolutionary vanguard is related to that of the necessary changes in the infrastructure. The oppressed, the exploited, those who are most vitally concerned in the success of the revolution are really the revolutionary vanguard when this is formed with and for them. We would like merely to indicate a tendency to a certain historical unrealism at this point among many Christians. They conceive of a revolution brought about largely by disinterested love, while the Marxists plan realistically for a revolution motivated by self-interest. Love incarnate in history is in no sense something unrelated to self-interest, provided this is not understood in a bourgeois and individualist sense. The concrete expression and realisation of the justified self-interest of the oppressed is the concrete expression of love within history. The more Christians identify themselves with the revolution through identification with the situation of the exploited the greater their possibility of being authentic revolutionaries.

This obviously in no way excludes from the ranks of the authentic revolutionaries those who like some Christians of bourgeois extraction maintain an effective solidarity with the goals of a revolutionary struggle which aims at the destruction of their own interests. This selfless presence can bring a certain humanising dimension into the very heart of the revolution. Only it must not idealise the revolution as an act of pure love in an idyllic, abstract and petit bourgeois sense.

The process of liberation aims at a revolution which is both anti-imperialist (and at the national level anti-oligarchical) and anti-technocratic. (The latter aim finds clear expression in the anti-developmentalist choice.) This twofold perspective destroys old revolutionary models. A liberation which claims to aspire not only to the well being of all, but also to their active human participation in all spheres of life presents a range of problems which are intimately related with deep Christian preoccupations.

The question of the specific Christian contribution to liberation is usually approached from an angle which is wrong. It is presumptuous and triumphalist. It takes as a starting point that Christians know much more than others what should be the truly human character of the liberation. Is it not much more important that a growing number of Christians resolve to make a genuine contribution to liberation instead of continuing to be preoccupied primarily with their 'specific contribution'? To insist upon the unique dynamic offered by the social teaching of the churches, while ignoring the terrible sociological reality of the great mass of 'Christian' reactionaries, is to do nothing less than to transform what is best in Christianity - its real possibility of contributing a humanising dimension - into a trivi l ideology.

In the present sociological situation of Christianity in the world as a whole and also in Latin America, neither the ecclesiastical structures nor the most widely accepted theology automatically secrete a 'specific Christian contribution' to liberation. On the other hand there does not exist, even in the realm of theory, a Christian anthropology which is so rooted in the realities of our situation in history that from this alone can be deduced the specific requirements of a fully humanising task.

The direction in which the 'specifically Christian' is to be sought seems generally clear: it is that which is specifically and wholly human, embodying faithfulness to real identification with love for one's neighbour. But it is not enough to insist on this theoretically: we have an overall vision of man. It is clear that a rereading of the Bible, and especially of the words of Christ, in the context of history, raises for us a series of radical questions to which Marxism is unable to give the necessary attention. Perhaps the culmination of these questions is in the Christian affirmation about conquering death, that ultimate alienation about whose overcoming Marx has nothing important or satisfactory to say. The historical aspect of the problem of death does not seem to be the affirmation of our faith in 'hereafter' (which, as we know, does not eliminate temptations to egotism), but rather this: that God who raised up Jesus is not a God of the dead but of the living, and that, because life is the milieu of God he wants it to be also the environment of men. When we understand this in a historical and transhistorical way, in terms of a Christian eschatology whose ultimate questions are necessarily mediated to us through questions posed by our immediate situation in history we are able to penetrate to the heart of that mystery of love which is giving one's life for others. Marxism in fact asks the same of all revolutionaries. But we believe it is no exaggeration to affirm that to this definite question about the human meaning of giving one's life for others - a question which has such profound and concrete relevance for the revolution - Marxism has been unable to give a reply, nor has it even tried to understand the importance of the problem.

We believe that the heart of Christianity 'Love: death-life' could be - but always at the historical and existential levels - the source of those radical human questions which are directly related to the daily demands of a life which has cast its lot wholly with the oppressed. Perhaps this is also the best way to give content to the specifically Christian contribution to liberation.

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The Revolution Beyond the Revolutions

by

Paul Abrecht

The ecumenical discussions of church and revolution in the 1966 World Conference on Church and Society opened a new era in Christian social thought. There were however at that moment in most countries only slight indications of the coming revolutionary change and the Conference could only detect some of the rumblings which were to herald the eruptions of 1968. It seemed therefore to many of the participants a fascinating but still distant concern. Since then, however, the church in every part of the world has in some measure come face to face with revolutionary upheavals and the theme of revolution has become almost a commonplace of ecumenical discussion today.

As the phenomenon of revolutionary change has become more universal and more total, it has also become more difficult to interpret and to understand. The early debates were in fact confined very largely to the demands for social justice, particularly in the poor nations and from oppressed peoples. In 1966, the churches were barely able to discern the significance of the technological, the cultural and the spiritual revolutions which have since become ever more important. Today the main problem is to relate these new aspects of the world revolutionary situation to the classical understanding of social and political revolution. Which comes first, the economic and ideological, or the technological and scientific revolution? And what is the relation of the cultural revolution to the other two?

At the moment no ideology or theory seems to provide an interpretation of the total revolutionary situation of our world. Classical revolutionary ideologies seem to founder when confronted by these new vitalities. Attempts to stretch Marxism or any of the traditional ideologies to provide such a total explanation have been quickly challenged by those who do not believe they do justice to new revolutionary realities.

The present situation therefore offers the Church a new and fundamental challenge which I should like to illustrate by surveying some of the recent interpretations of the world-wide social upheaval which faces us.

I. An Apocalyptic Concept of Revolution

A common interpretation of our revolutionary situation today is that all existing social systems have failed; none is capable of meeting the challenge of a new understanding of the human and of needed social change. There is at the moment no alternative system. The only hope is in giving more "power to the people", in programmes of participation and conscientization,

through which they will gain the freedom to discover the state of their domination by old structures, begin the process of their liberation and become aware of new human possibilities.

The apocalyptic element in this conception of revolution emerges with the idea that the historical categories of "oppressed" and "oppressor" can be overcome and the liberation of mankind can be permanently achieved in history. An ultimate vision of human liberation and justice is thus reduced to a practical programme; the eschatological dimension of the Christian faith is historicized and secularized in terms of the revolutionary concept of the "end" of the old and the search for the "new" man and the "new" society. In this way the apocalyptic vision becomes Utopian idealism. (1)

This type of interpretation of our situation has been developed in different ways. Some Christian social thinkers find in our situation parallels with previous experiences in Christian history, where, as in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Christian communities developed their apocalyptic visions of a freer humanity and a more just society. Prof. Richard Shaull (one of the key speakers in the ecumenical debate on church and revolution in 1966) in a recent essays entitled "The End of the Road and a New Beginning" (2) offers an interpretation of our revolutionary situation along these lines.

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(1) See for example the writings of such Christian social thinkers as Ivan Illich and Paulo Freire. In his book, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (New York, 1970) Freire writes:

> "The pedagogy of the oppressed, as a humanist and libertarian pedagogy, has two distinct stages. In the first, the oppressed unveil the world of oppression and through the praxis commit themselves to its transformation. In the second stage, in which the reality of oppression has already been transformed, this pedagogy ceases to belong to the oppressed and becomes a pedagogy of all men in the process of permanent liberation." (p. 40)

In a further passage he adds: "It is therefore essential that the oppressed wage the struggle to resolve the contradiction in which they are caught and the contradiction will be resolved by the appearance of the new man; neither oppressor or oppressed, but man in the process of liberation. If the goal of the oppressed is to become fully human, they will not achieve their goal by merely reversing the terms of the contradiction, by simply changing poles. This may seem simplistic; it is not. Resolution of the oppressor-oppressed contradiction indeed implies the disappearance of the oppressors as the dominant class." (p. 42)

This Utopian vision in Dr. Freire's thought does not of course invalidate his many insights into the means by which the powerful maintain their domination over others and the possibilities of developing through a pedagogy of dialogue and participation an effective challenge to their power.

(2) Prof. Shaull's essay appears in Marxism and Radical Religion - Essays Toward a Revolutionary Humanism, edited by John C. Raines & Thomas Dean, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1970.

He writes:

"The structures and institutions within which humans live seem to be bound by a given logic and process of development which makes it impossible for them to respond creatively to the new challenges around them; consequently only the negation of the old order and a qualitative change of structures will open the way to the creation of the new. Our predicament is due to the fact that, having arrived at this dead-end, we are thus far unable to bury the dead or to give birth to the new."

Prof. Shaull is persuaded that by "a tremendous act of faith" the Christian heritage which provided much of the imagery and many of the concepts for new beginnings in the past "can be operative today and can contribute to the formation of communities at the margin of the churches' life, which will make some contribution to the struggle in which we are now engaged".

He places great emphasis on the creative possibilities of such "paradigmatic radical communities". They are needed to support the new revolutionary men who must participate in both the destruction of the old order and the construction of a totally new one. Such persons live in the tension created by the knowledge of the suffering and injustice caused by the failure of the old order and the "tremendous sense of urgency which that produces"; they must struggle against great odds to create the new society "which has not yet been thought or formed"; and at the same time they must develop the capacity to transcend the revolutionary struggle as the necessary condition of their creative participation in it.

Prof. Shaull believes that the new radical communities must integrate both the personal and the social aspects of life, as well as the secular and the religious. Whether the search for a new society starts from a religious or secular perspective is unimportant: "What is important is the freedom to work at the task of creating the new while carrying on a dialogue with a particular heritage and the experience of a historical community."

It is this combination of total scepticism about the dominant world systems and a tremendous confidence in the creative outcome of life in small groups or communities, withdrawn from any real dependence upon such systems and living in revolutionary opposition to them, that marks much revolutionary thinking today. Will the revolution come about through such radical communities and will it be in the manner Prof. Shaull suggests? On what basis are we to assume that these communal groups will achieve a universal outlook and escape local, regional, class or group pressures, and not be tempted by the dilettantism, fanaticism, and sectarianism to which all such groups have been liable? How will these groups cope with the anarchic and authoritarian elements which often dominate the human situation during the period when old social systems are collapsing? Prof. Shaull gives no answer to these and many other questions. Even if his pessimism about the future of contemporary society is plausible, his hopes for a new beginning seem based on a greatly simplified analysis of the ways social structures can be changed. He is of course far too astute theologically to believe that the Kindgom of God will be ushered in by one more revolution, but his almost

exclusive emphasis on the discontinuities of history and the complete breakthrough which is needed suggests that he is trying to find in biblical apocalypticism a practical basis for a revolutionary social change. Such Christian idealism can lead to escapism and to illusions about the task of the Christian in relation to political and social structures and how to cope with the evil in them. Prof. Shaull is surely no Christian rationalist y t his understanding of revolutionary change seems to assume that there is an essential harmony of interests among people which will predominate once oppressive social structures no longer inhibit them. (3)

While affirming that the Christian revolutionary must engage in "constant social analysis" and while convinced of "the breakdown of all total world views", Shaull is confident that in the determination of the "priorities in social criticism" Marxism must be favoured over "the liberal tradition". He writes:

> "If we are at a dead-end in many of our structures and institutions and must discover how to embark upon a new beginning, then the theologian will find himself much closer to the Marxist than to the liberal and will have to give primary attention, in his critical work, to exposing the limitations and failures of the liberal tradition."

In a world perspective, however, the dilemmas and doubts about Marxism are today no less substantial and perplexing than those provoked by the liberal tradition. It is illuminating at this point to listen to a voice from within a Marxist society about the future of Marxism and of the society which it has produced.

II. The Challenge to Socialist Society?

It is ironic that at the same time as the bankruptcy of liberal democracy is proclaimed, the great Marxist experiment in Russia is also harshly rejected. The essay, Will the Soviet Union Survive Until 1984? by the young Russian writer, Andrej Amalrik, is in many respects similar in apocalyptic urgency

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(3) This kind of Christian idealistic rationalism is in striking contrast with the insights of J.M. Keynes, the great English economist and social thinker of the period between the two World Wars. No theologian but with a mind deeply influenced by Christian categories he wrote as follows of his generation's "early beliefs" in human reason and moral progress: "In short, we repudiated all versions of the doctrine of original sin, of there being insane and irrational springs of wickedness in most men. We were not aware that civilization was a thin and precarious crust erected by the personality and the will of a very few, and only maintained by rules and conventions skillfully put across and guilefully preserved ... The rationality which we attributed to it (human nature) led to a superficiality, not only of judgement, but also of feeling." Two Memoirs (London, 1949), p. 99-100. Keynes did not use "sin" to justify the status quo. It seems rather to have increased his realism in knowing how and where to initiate social change.

to Shaull's analysis of Western society (4). Amalrik believes that the Soviet Communism is finished just as Shaull believes that the Western political and social structures are coming to an end. He has no hesitation in saying that the Soviet system will not last another 15 years! Like Shaull, he despairs of half-way solutions: the attempts to democratize and introduce the rule of law into the monolithic Marxist system have failed. He concludes that there is little hope of preserving such a regime through gradual reform. The inner contradictions are too great!

> "On the one hand the regime, in the interest of stability, is constantly forced to observe its own laws, while on the other it is constantly forced to violate them so as to counteract the tendency towards democratization. This has given rise to two interesting phenomena: mass persecution outside the judicial system and selective judicial persecution."

He rejects also the view that gradual improvement in the standard of living and exposure to Western culture will slowly but surely transform Soviet society and help to create a humane socialism. The groups that want such change, the middle classes, are too weak in numbers, and lack leadership and courage. As for the masses, "no one ... knows exactly what attitudes prevail among the wider sections of the population ... As I see it, popular views can best be described by the words 'passive discontent'!"

The greatest weakness of Marxist society, according to Amalrik, is the absence of a strong sense of moral responsibility, in part the consequence of the elimination of Christian social ethic.

> "The Christian ethic with its concepts of right and wrong, has been shaken loose and driven out of the popular consciousness. An attempt was made to replace it with class morality which can be summarized as follows: good is what at any given moment is required by authority. Naturally such a morality, together with the propagation and stimulation of class and national animosities, has totally demoralized society and deprived it of any non-opportunistic criteria."

In face of this situation Amalrik is driven to a Christian-like view of the ambiguity of all human hopes and of the persistence of evil in all human activity. For him the struggle for human dignity and freedom becomes highly personal in character and eschatological in nature. The only hope is in individuals or groups which continue to witness to the truth as they see it regardless of the historical possibility of achieving practical results. In a letter addressed to a Western European publisher he writes:

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(4) Andrej Amalrik, Will the Soviet Union Survive Until 1984?, Allen Lane The Penguin Press, London, 1970. 124 p. For other critiques of socialism by Communists in Western Europe see Roger Garaudy's, The Turning Point of Socialism (London, 1970), which echoes many of the criticisms made from within the system.

"I think that as soon as the interest in the West in me and my writings passes, I will be arrested and tried on some false charge or other, and that my writings will not even be mentioned in the trial ... So far, however, I am in fact enjoying greater freedom than many Soviet citizens. But I owe this only to myself. I want to be free. It is precisely because of this that I act as any free man can and should act. I publish my books under my own name and I want to enjoy all the rights of an author. Even in prison, if they do put me in prison, I hope to remain more free than millions of my and your compatriots who in their time while 'free' shouted 'hurrah' to Stalin and Hitler and believed in the omnipotence of the organizations created by them."

This letter was written on April 2, 1970. The following month Amalrik was arrested.

There is a profoundly paradoxical quality to the revolutionary thought of two such writers as Shaull and Amalrik: each calling for total change and finding his only hope in the principles of the system opposite to his own! How are we to interpret a revolutionary situation in which the traditional recipes for social change cancel out? Where there is such total disillusionment with the great social systems on which modern industrial society has been built, what is the way ahead for the future? And what hope is there that the developing regions of the world can cope with the social and spiritual deficiencies of the world systems which compete for their allegiance (5)?

At the World Conference in 1966 there was still some support for the idea of convergence between these two great world systems, the belief that the best ideas of each would be factored out by the other - a kind of mutual trade-off of the most human elements of each. Today, if we are to judge by these samples, ideological thinking about the future seems to rule out the likelihood of such a synthesis. Each system in self-defense seems to turn in on itself thus contributing to its own self-destruction.

III. The Revolution of the Counter-Culture

The disillusionment with all structures and ideologies described above is heightened by a conviction, now widespread, that neither the liberal market economy (however socialized) nor the Communist society (however liberalized) is able to meet the challenge of a dehumanized technological society; and that what is needed is a new radical look at the assumptions of the whole

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(5) Shaull is convinced that "liberalism" cannot help Third World countries in their social development and Amalrik is persuaded that Maoism is repeating all the mistakes of Russian Communism. On this point Garaudy writes in The Turning Point of Socialism (p. 129-130): "A critical if objective examination of the Chinese model should help us not to forget, in the face of present perversions, the significance and greatness of the Chinese Revolution, in the same way that neither the Stalinist perversions nor those of the present Soviet leaders can make us forget the significance and greatness of the Russian October Revolution." But might not the same be said of the present American or European perversions of the great revolutions of liberal democracy?

of modern science-based technological society. The capitalist and Marxist systems must both be judged from a new perspective: their ability to cope with the crisis of man in a technologically organized world. This leads to a demand for revolutionary change that goes beyond the traditional revolutionary doctrine of right and left.

The writing on this theme has become voluminous. It is developed compellingly by the American historian Theodore Roszak in his book, The Making of a Counter-Culture (6).

In Roszak's view the real opponent today and the real source of the malaise of our human situation is "the technocracy". This is defined as: "that society in which those who govern justify themselves by appeal to scientific forms of knowledge. And beyond the authority of science, there is no appeal." Traditional revolutionary political or economic tactics have little effect against this enemy, and opposition to it involves "the greater task of altering the total cultural context within which our daily politics takes place".

Disputes between left, right, and centre, "these are quarrels between technocrats or between factions who subscribe to technocratic values from first to last. The angry debates of conservative and liberal, radical and reactionary, touch everything except the technocracy, because the technocracy is not generally perceived as a political phenomenon in our advanced industrial societies. It holds the place, rather, of a grand imperative which is beyond question, beyond discussion."

In contrast to the position of the traditional left, Roszak argues that "it is essential to realize that the technocracy is not the exclusive product of that old devil capitalism ... It is the product of a mature and accelerating industrialism." We are coping with a phenomenon which transcends familiar political categories and ideologies, something which is "ideologically invisible".

In his view it is not surprising that the attack on "the technocracy" is led by youth and students and finds expression in various forms as "the counter-culture". Their first task is to free themselves from "adult social forces", including those of the traditional left, all of which have based their thinking on the unquestioned assumptions of a scientific technological culture.

The youth thus become the revolutionaries of the future:

> "... by way of a dialectic Marx could never have imagined technocratic America produces a potentially revolutionary element among its own youth. The bourgeoisie, instead of discovering the class enemy in its own factories, finds it across the breakfast table in the person of its own pampered children."

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(6) Theodore Roszak, The Making of a Counter-Culture, Doubleday, New York, 1967.

See also Charles A. Reich, The Greening of America, New York, 1970.

Against this challenge the traditional conservative, liberal or radical politics of the adult generation is powerless. The youth are challenging "a civilization sunk in an unshakeable commitment to genocide, gambling madly with the universal extermination of our species". As a result, "building the good society is not primarily a social, but a psychic task. What makes the youthful disaffiliation of our time a cultural phenomenon, rather than merely a political movement, is the fact that it strikes beyond ideology to the level of consciousness, seeking to transform our deepest sense of the self, the other, the environment."

For Roszak and other thinkers of the counter-culture, the revolutionary demand of the present involves therefore a religious challenge, the search for the means of overcoming the real source of alienation of man from man, "the idolatrous worship of things". He makes a stringent and searching critique of various contemporary social philosophies and ideologies, neo-Marxist and others, singling out especially their "stubbornly and conventionally secular character", and their opposition to "any religious conception of transcendence". His critique of Marcuse is illustrative:

> "The commitment (to fighting social injustice) is honourable ... and yet, in its own way, its politicization of human experience may be the herald of totalitarianism far subtler than any Marcuse has so far discovered ... For him, the symbols of poetic vision can have only a horizontal, historical significance. They guide us towards the secular future, never toward that ever-present sacramental dimension of life designated by Blake as 'the real and eternal world of which this Vegetable Universe is but a faint shadow!' ... On what grounds are we to tell those who claim to have known these 'things unseen' that they have not known them ... not really? Or that what they have known is no part of our liberation?

Some have found in Roszak's thesis a glorification of the irrational and moral support for an indiscriminate and destructive attack on all scientific thought. It is true that his challenge to contemporary scientific culture is sweeping. Like Shaull and Amalrik, he accepts no compromise; the revolutionary challenge to the present ideological basis of society must be total. He writes:

> "In order, then, to root out those distortive assumptions, nothing less is required than the subversion of the scientific world view, with its entrenched commitment to an egocentric and cerebral mode of consciousness. In its place, there must be a new culture in which the non-intellective capacities of the personality - those capacities that take fire from visionary splendour and the experience of human communion - become the arbiters of the good, the true and the beautiful."

This total rejection is shocking to an age which has come to take all the assumptions of a scientific-secular outlook for granted. It is all the more astounding that the challenge comes not from the religious establishment but from those within secular society who have discovered its spiritual emptiness. Roszak and those who think like him must no doubt be regarded as the prophets of a new dimension of the revolutionary spirit of our times.

The question must, however, be posed, what are the real components of this new religious concern and what is to be made of it from the Christian perspective? The answers of Roszak are disappointing. The religious basis for the revolutionary counter-culture he offers us is an odd combination of insights drawn from American Indian Shamanism, elements of Taoism, with a dash of Christian mysticism. One has the impression that much of the substance of Roszak's spiritual vitality remains hidden. The early parts of his book suggest a theological and ethical creativity based on experience and insight deeper than those he declares.

He is an optimist but no Utopian. He understands the tendency of revolutionaries to destroy themselves by their excesses. His criticisms of the dehumanizing tendencies of some adherents of the counter-culture are noteworthy. Speaking of the lack of direction and self-discipline of the counter-cultural generation he writes:

> "There are manifestations around the fringe of the counter-culture that one cannot but regard as worrisomely unhealthy. Elements of pornographic grotesquery and blood-curdling sadomasochism emerge again and again in the art and theatre of our youth culture and intrude themselves constantly into the underground press ... Even where such crudity is meant to satirize or reply in kind to the corruptions of the dominant culture, there is bound to come a point where sardonic imitation destroys the sensibilities and produces simple callousness." (7)

He does not apparently believe in the natural goodness of man, but accepts the discipline which comes from a faith which builds on the transcendence of the human. His confidence derives from something like a Christian understanding of history: God will not be mocked; good will prevail over evil; as soon as mankind has rediscovered this truth then shall we see some intimation of the Kingdom of God in this world (8).

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(7) The attack upon the institution of the family as the symbol of repressive capitalist society in the book, The Death of the Family by David Cooper (Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 1971) is a recent example of the large measure of passionate incoherence and dehumanized social thinking which infiltrates and threatens cultural revolutionary thought today.

(8) In sharp contrast to Roszak's positive interpretation of the counter-cultural revolution is the pessimistic interpretation of Daniel Bell in his essay, "The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism", The Public Interest, No. 21, Autumn 1970, p. 16-43. Bell argues that the present cultural revolution is an autonomous movement of ideas which transcends the ideological and social positions of the past. However, he sees it as almost purely destructive; it is an "adversary culture" to the bourgeois world view and arises from spiritual impulses which Western civilization has up to now successfully disciplined and curbed. While his description of the counter-culture is illuminating his evaluation seems often biased and unfair. As a result the liberating power of the counter-culture is not reckoned with sufficiently in his analysis.

Some Concluding Observations

The sweep and variety of revolutionary thought today indicates how widespread is the impatience with the old structures and the search for new patterns and styles of life. Loss of confidence in the old systems is the common denominator of all revolutionary thinking today. The change demanded clearly reflects a judgement on the old cultures, the old theories, and the old dispensations of justice. Judging by these common elements in the various ideologies and movements, we may conclude that modern revolutionary thought, cultural, political, social, economic and technological, converges remarkably in the demand for new institutions, new social goals, and the search for new understanding of the human.

Even the divergences and disagreements in analysis and interpretation and the development of different revolutionary strategies do not detract from the importance of the revolutionary critique. Indeed one of the positive and creative aspects of revolutionary thought is its exuberant pluralism, a sign of the ethical and spiritual vitality of the present revolutionary mood, which gives it its power, its fascination, and its validity. The churches must surely rejoice in this present explosion of thought, of searching and of experimenting, which seeks ideas and conceptions of man and society that are truly liberating and creative. Contemporary revolutionary movements are the most valid spokesmen for the "least of God's people", the service of whom provides the one sure criterion of redemptive witness and action in the Christian perspective.

The new revolutionary movements also reveal, however, certain ideological tensions and conflicts within and among themselves. The various ingredients which make them up have not produced one great revolutionary cake but a number of relatively small revolutionary cookies. Christians are forced to reflect on the relative truth of the various ideological mixes and to question various recipes for redemption. Reinhold Niebuhr once wrote, "We always live in peril not only of 'land and sea' but also of 'false brethren'." The Christian must constantly examine the dogmatic assumptions on which prescriptions for social salvation proceed. Moreover, there is a tendency for each of these revolutionary prescriptions to become ever more determined in asserting its claims, so that the revolutionary spirit, "Let a Hundred Flowers Grow" quickly gives way to the totalitarian urge to "Let One Flower Grow".

Two major problems of the present revolutionary movements may be summarized as follows:

1. The difficulty of integrating the revolutions. No revolutionary group or thinker has yet provided a way of integrating the three great revolutions of our time: the religious-cultural, the scientific-technological, and the political-economic. While lip service is paid to this need, most revolutionary thinkers remain stuck in traditional systems. Thus Roger Garaudy, writing on The Turning Point of Socialism, tells us: "Where the elaboration of a socialist model is concerned, the major problem today is presented by the new scientific and technological revolution." Yet nowhere in his book does he analyze the nature of this scientific and technological revolution, and

he returns, almost as a reflex, to the traditional socialist formula that private ownership of the means of production must be brought to an end. However, he does add that "while this is a necessary precondition it is not wholly adequate, as our analysis of the Soviet model has shown".

As André Philip stated in his essay for the 1966 Conference on Church and Society, the technical revolution poses a series of problems which can scarcely be solved by complete socialization. The crisis in parliamentary institutions, because of the political dependence on scientific and technical expertise, is forcing radical changes in the way in which political consensus is arrived at. At the same time, the technological revolution poses in a new way the question of the kind of society we want. "Since it is now within our power (thanks to technological progress) to forge our own destiny, for what purpose are we going to use that power?" And as Roszak has rightly observed, the control of technological power becomes the key issue, raising not only political and social questions, but also cultural and religious questions which go to the heart of human endeavour today. Thus the revolutionary today cannot take for granted traditional revolutionary values, goals and teaching regarding the nature and destiny of man and is forced to re-examine his criteria of humanization.

Similarly, the meaning of technological revolution can be fully understood only in terms of the radical social-economic change demanded by oppressed peoples. The danger today is that the western world, absorbed by the present cultural and technological revolution, will see it apart from the social and economic one.

2. The limits of a revolutionary system. It appears inevitable that all ideological, political, and religious systems tend towards Utopianism and totalitarianism in spirit if not in actual practice: what they cannot explain is either not worth explaining or remains beyond human understanding; the explanation of what they can explain is final. This totalitarian tendency is readily understandable, since for the ideologue there is no neutrality; it is one class versus another; it is the new ideology versus the traditional; it is the oppressed versus the oppressor, it is liberalism versus Marxism, etc. This seems no less true of social systems today than it was in the past. Utopianism quickly asserts itself in all systems and it becomes an admission of weakness to be unable to solve all problems within that framework.

What is the Christian responsibility to point out the limits of all social systems, and at what points is this critical function especially pertinent today? Or to put the matter more existentially, how can Christians be revolutionaries while holding on to their understanding of the limits of the human? The Christian idea of sin can be (and has been) used to justify the status quo, but the opposite danger is an idealistic maximalizing of human possibilities which must certainly encourage illusions and lead to inevitable frustration. Those who cannot accept and endure the limits - the failures, the betrayals, and the tragedies of social change - are likely to give up the social struggle. (9)

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(9) A critic of this paper suggests that "the Teilhardistic elements in much of recent theology (little or no emphasis on sin) begins to show its effects" in Christian social thought today.

It is this search for the most creative possible action, not the ultimate perfect solution, that should mark the true revolutionary. It is at this point that much of the present agitation for revolutionary conscientization may become its own worst enemy, especially where the emphasis is on complete discontinuity with the structures of the past, and total liberation from them. From the Christian standpoint there is no absolute criterion of liberation within history. There are, theologically speaking, only relative changes and relative freedoms.

To struggle for this perspective is not to compromise the human goals of the revolution or to set fixed limits to revolutionary change, but to challenge the tendency both to absolutize and to idealize revolutionary change, or to use the ultimate Christian criterion as a practical and realizable objective. Without such a limit, the ambivalence of all human endeavour is obscured, and social and political action in the name of justice tends towards a holy crusade. (10)

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(10) In a recent futuristic draft Constitution for 1990 published by a Christian journal in the U.S.A., it was stated that "all property shall be owned by a Collective Comradery, or Commonwealth, or by the Continental Congress. No person shall own any property ..." To which a critic, a writer of the New Left, responded: "What shall become of my writing desk if I don't choose to belong to a Living (or Work) Collective? ... Here I am alone with my desk, at which I write angry manifestos calling for revolution (or, for that matter, counter-revolution). Can I own my desk? Or does someone else have the right to take it to use as firewood?" Motive (published by the Division of Higher Education, United Methodist Church, U.S.A.), March 1971, p. 18. The critic at least recognizes that all the problems might not be solved by this formula for 1990.